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Sierra Tarascans

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126 Usually, field notes were classified, typed in triplicate, and filed according to a modification of the system of the Outline of Cultural Materials prepared by George P. Murdock and others for use in the Cross-Cultural Survey at Yale University (Murdock and others, 1938). In this way it was possible for all workers to find immediately what had already been collected on a subject and to discover discrepancies in accounts when these existed. The system also served to show deficiencies in the data.

123 Certain other problems in field methods arose. Cherán habits place some obstacles in the way of field work. The main occupations of the town are farming and forest exploitation. In [512] the former case, men are usually in the fields all day, often at points several miles distant from town. In the latter instance, men may be away from town for 4 or 5 days at a time. In certain seasons the town is almost deserted during the day. As women will not talk with strange men [609] in the absence of their husbands, it often took many visits to find at home a man we wished to query on some specific point. In addition, yards are surrounded by high walls and it is customary to greet visitors at the yard gate and converse with them on the street. Consequently, it is difficult to gain much insight into home life. Only women can get free access into the houses, and it is unfortunate that Sra. Rendón could not have spent full time in the field. Certain aspects of this study would then have been much better than they are.

In general, the method followed was first to discuss a topic with Sr. Chávez in detail, obtaining from him as complete an account as possible. In some cases Sr. Chávez also wrote supplementary accounts. Efforts were always made to get the names of specific people who were involved. Once we had obtained what might be considered Sr. Chávez's view of a particular aspect of the culture, this was sometimes checked with Sr. Rangel. On other occasions we started with Sr. Rangel and checked with Sr. Chávez. An effort was then made to visit and talk with a large number of the people concerned. For example, after securing Sr. Chávez' account of childbirth, a list of all the professional midwives in town was secured. These were all then visited by Dr. Palacios and interviewed intensively. Some were inter-

593 Ideally, the objectives of the family are achieved by joint and harmonious cooperation between husband and wife. As in other cul-
[578] tures, there exist households in which there are continual quarreling and dislike between husband and wife, sometimes culminating in divorce. More common seem to be harmonious households in which at least mutual understanding and toleration are achieved; probably in the majority of cases there are also affection and trust. In harmonious households, all activities and plans are discussed by husband and wife. Even though a piece of land is owned by the man, he will consult with his wife before selling it and she will do the same with reference to her property. Important purchases are usually made only after consultation, also. In most cases where trust exists between husband and wife, it is the wife who holds the purse. That is, most actual cash is given to the wife. On her devolves the responsibility for spending the money wisely in small affairs and in accumulating the savings necessary for buying new lands or houses.

In general, the man is definitely the head of the family, but the manner of wielding authority and the degree of authority vary with the personalities of the married couple. If the man owns considerable property and the woman comes from a poor family, the man may enforce his authority by reminding her that she has nothing. There are also cases where the woman owns practically everything and uses the fact to dominate her husband. Ideally, and probably actually in a great many cases, the couple treat their property as being owned in common. In any case, both parents seem to wield about equal authority over the children. Women may give orders to their sons until they marry, just as much as may the men. Girls, on the other hand, are more directly dominated by their mothers, and the father expresses his opinions concerning their upbringing to the mother.

512 Within the household certain routines and habits are common. Labor is rather strictly
593 divided along sexual lines also. For example,
[462] the family usually rises about 5 o'clock in the morning, breakfasts about 8, lunches or dines at 1, and sups at 7:30 or 8, but the hours tend to vary from family to family. The family usually

593 sleeps on mats in the kitchen, husband and wife on one mat with a single blanket. Small chil-
● 512 dren under 9 or 10 years old sleep with the parents; above that age they sleep on separate mats and have a separate blanket.

512 The general weekly routine of the family of
517 a farmer or of a forest worker, who represent the typical Cherán families, is about as follows. On Sunday most of the women go to Mass at 6:30 or 7. The men may go at this time or wait until the 8 o'clock Mass, or may stay home and sweep the courtyard and street in front of the house. Children usually go to the 8 o'clock Mass. Most people do not eat until after Mass.

After Mass, men stand around the church and plaza or on the streets talking to their friends before going home for breakfast. After breakfasting, the young men get towels
[515] and go to the bathing place in one of the *barrancas* (about a mile from town) and bathe. The older men go out and loaf about the streets all morning, talking to friends and acquaintances. Older men bathe less often, but also usually bathe on Sunday. Between 11 and 12 the younger men return home, eat again, pick up their blankets (it is more apt to be windy or
[132] rainy in the afternoons) and go out on the streets to meet their friends again. Women may go out after dinner and visit neighbors. Small children, it might be noted, do not go to Mass but play around the house and nearby streets all day. A young unmarried man may hang around the corner near the house of some girl in whom he is interested. If the girl is also interested, she will go out after water several times during the day and the two will talk on the streets. If they are clever and the girl's family is either not very strict or not very suspicious, they may manage to talk together several hours.

At 5 p. m. is the *Rosario*, attended by many women, some men, and many of the young people. After the *Rosario* is the favorite time for steal-
[584] ing a girl for a wedding and, especially in the fall, the young man may be involved in helping his friends. Or he may simply walk along in the direction his girl is going in the hope of having a chance to talk to her. Alternatively, he may talk on the streets with friends or go to one of the billiard parlors. Although people eat later than usual on Sundays, the young

512 unmarried men may not come home until 9 or
517 10 o'clock, when the family is in bed, and they feed themselves with cold food left for them.

512 On Monday the men and young men go to the fields or to the mountains between 7 and 9
462 o'clock, after eating a breakfast which always includes tortillas and chile and likely includes remnants of the previous day's meal such as *sopa de tortilla*. If the men are going out all day and the place is distant, they take a lunch. If the place is nearby, wives carry lunch to their menfolk. Women will take maize to the mill and carry whatever water is needed during the morning. They may also buy some vegetables at the market, although most will have done this at the Saturday market. They may shop for meat and other needed items at the store. The main housework will be sweeping and putting the sleeping mats in the "*troje*." Then the woman will start work on the midday meal for herself and children (earlier if she is to take dinner to the fields, which she will do if her husband is working within an hour's walk). This meal is apt to be quite simple if the husband is not home. Some women make tortillas before dinner and again before supper. Others will eat warmed up tortillas for dinner. After dinner, following about an hour's rest, these women will make up a supply of tortillas sufficient to last 24 hours. An older daughter may be set at this work. In any case, probably 2 hours will be put in making tortillas and preparing supper. Men who went for firewood will probably be home as early as 4 o'clock, others not until 5 or 5:30, while those who had to look for a strayed animal or who are delayed for other reasons may come in after dark. The men of the family will eat together; the women and children usually eat together but after the men. Before he eats, a man may have to water and feed his animals, unless there is a small boy who can do it.

517 After supper a man will often go out on the street for about an hour to loaf and talk to
512 friends. Young men will go out and stay longer; they are usually the last to bed. Small children are put in bed about 8 o'clock.

512 Some families vary the schedule given above. In a fair number of cases the men of the family
462 rise before the women and go to the fields without breakfast. The woman in this case

512 462 usually takes the maize to the mill or grinds it herself, in the meantime making atole. The men return about 10 for breakfast (*almuerzo*). Usually the women and children already have eaten, but some women wait until their husbands have eaten.

Tuesday, men go out as on Monday. Women may wash clothes on Tuesday, in which case they leave home at 8 and do not return until about 2. There is no regular wash day for all of Cherán, but each woman usually has a regular wash day. Customarily women bathe when they wash clothes.

512 Subsequent days of the week until Saturday are much the same, the main variation being in the time of washing. Some younger girls and [469] boys go to church between 11:30 and 1 o'clock for doctrinal training from Monday through Friday. About a fourth of the younger boys also go to school.

Saturday the men come home early, usually [517] by 3:30. They loaf about street corners, the plaza, billiard parlors, and saloons. There is a small market in the plaza and women shop and talk there between about 5 and 7. Sometimes a man sees his wife at the plaza and goes home with her, or seeing her leave he may follow a few minutes later. Saturday night supper is the best meal of the week. It features fish, if possible, and there may be special treats such as fruit, peanuts, cherimoyas, sugarcane, avocados, or other items, depending on the season. Supper is late, often between 8 and 10, and the family goes to bed soon afterward.

512 462 In some ways the activities of men are less varied and complex than those of the women. A man works at his fields or his trade as it is necessary. When slack time occurs, he goes for firewood or does odd jobs about the house. He serves on the *ronda* or night watch and does other municipal jobs when called upon to do so. In his free time he may sit about home or go out on the streets or to the plaza.

517 159 It would be a mistake to assume, however, that the man's life is an unending cycle of labor, broken only by Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Young men, of course, spend more time in recreation than do older people. Agustín Rangel, who probably represents a somewhat extreme case, remembered the following activities: